UNITED NATIONS **A**

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/50/530
9 October 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fiftieth session
Agenda item 9

GENERAL DEBATE

Letter dated 6 October 1995 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions of my Government, I have the honour to write to you in connection with the statement made in the general debate by Dr. Laszlo Kovacs, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Hungary, on 28 September 1995.

Since the statement presents a distorted picture of the situation in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia concerning the position of national minorities, including Hungarian, it is necessary, for the sake of truth, to point out the following.

The Foreign Minister found it necessary to express grave concern over "... the settlement of refugees in new areas traditionally inhabited by other national minorities in order to change their century-old ethnic composition ..." and even went as far as to suggest that forcible means and intimidation were used against the Croat and Hungarian minorities in Vojvodina, an autonomous province of the Republic of Serbia.

To allege that any form of pressure has been used against minorities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including Hungarian, is totally baseless. All minorities in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia enjoy the same rights as other citizens of Yugoslavia, without any discrimination whatsoever. They are entitled to additional protection on the basis of specific minority rights, which by far exceed the highest standards of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Those are guaranteed by the Constitutions of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and both of its constituent republics, Serbia and Montenegro.

There have been some instances of intimidation by individuals against members of national minorities but those were isolated cases which were strongly

condemned by the Yugoslav Government, which undertook vigorous measures against the perpetrators.

While the Foreign Minister, as Chairman-in-Office of OSCE, singled out the alleged problems in connection with the settlement of refugees in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, unfortunately he failed to address the causes of that problem and condemn the Croatian aggression against Krajina and the grave violations of humanitarian law committed against the Serb people almost all of whom were forced to flee from their ancestral homes and denied a right to return. Had Hungary and other international factors exerted their influence on Croatia, there would not have been any need for the Serbs to flee and be resettled in the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The resolution of the problem is not in blaming Yugoslavia for being generous towards its fellow-countrymen in distress but in urging Croatia to respect the fundamental human rights of Serbs and allow all refugees to return to their homeland.

As far as the settlement of the refugees is concerned, it is a sovereign right of any State to decide, depending on available resources, where in its territory to settle them. My Government is doing its utmost under the circumstances (economic hardships brought about by the harsh sanctions regime; a heavy burden of half a million refugees already cared for since the onset of the Yugoslav crisis and the hostilities and war in its neighbourhood) to provide adequate accommodation and care for more than 200,000 refugees recently expelled from Krajina.

The Yugoslav Government expresses the hope that Hungary as a neighbour country and Chairman-in-Office of the OSCE will come to realize that only the treatment of Yugoslavia as an equal partner would be conducive to a speedy resolution of the conflict and achieving a lasting peace.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda item 9.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIC
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.